



south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Learning. Leadership. Service.

Application for Distance Learning Provider

Notice to potential distance learning providers of the opportunity to provide services under South Dakota Administrative Rules Chapter 24:43:12 and the application procedures for obtaining approval from DOE to be an approved provider of those services.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT:

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Background

Governor Mike Rounds has proposed a South Dakota Virtual High School initiative. This initiative will change the future of education in South Dakota. The South Dakota virtual high school would provide choice accessibility, flexibility, quality, and equity in curricular offerings. The statewide virtual school initiative would standardize the provisions to allow students an equitable opportunity to a quality academic experience. South Dakota high school students themselves are driving the need for this change in education.

The technology that has changed the world outside schools is now changing the learning and teaching environment within them. This is being driven by students themselves, born and living in the digital age of the Internet. Virtual schools are defined as an online learning program in which students enroll and earn credit towards academic achievement based on successful completion of the course/courses provided by the school.

Purpose

Establish a process for distance learning providers to provide coursework using the statewide virtual high school providing students with an equitable opportunity to a “quality” academic experience.

Eligibility Requirements

To be included on the approved list of distance learning providers, applicants must meet the following criteria:

Program Type: Local schools accept completed proficiency of coursework and credit that work. The development of a 24-7 virtual high school provides equitable access to all students.

Student Tracking: The management system for tracking students would have fields indicating enrollment in any online coursework for students. The tracking provides an accurate count of student activity in the online arena to address specific financial questions and student academic status.

Funding: Current rules require students to enroll for coursework through their local attendance center. The local school that a student is enrolled in receives the ADM state reimbursement.

Curriculum: The software curriculum can be developed by highly qualified instructional staff or purchased. The curriculum needs to be aligned with the state standards and meet/exceed federal expectations.

Equity & Access: Equity and access address students with disabilities. Federal law needs to be addressed.

Student Achievement: Current rules require registration at the local attendance center. Students have contacts at their home attendance center. The local attendance center identifies personnel

(administration or counselor) to register, monitor, mentor, and proctor assessments as per state rule. Online students would be required to take the state assessment.

Teachers: Federal mandates require highly qualified teachers. Distance teachers will meet state licensure and certification in the class/classes they teach. Professional preparation in the form of coursework delivery and yearly professional development to maintain effective distance instructional strategies should be considered.

Consistent Coursework: Provide educational coursework that is consistent with state academic standards. The South Dakota content standards are available for download from the South Dakota Department of Education's website at <http://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/index.asp>

Additionally, provider must:

- Provide letters of reference
- Be financially sound
- Provide course material that is available 24/7.
- Provide parents of each student receiving coursework current information on the progress of the student
- Meet all applicable Federal, State, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws
- Provide evidence of satisfactory background checks for all instructional staff

Responsibilities of the Distance Learning Approved Provider

Entities included on the Approved Distance Learning Providers list are required to do the following:

Entities included on the Approved Distance Learning Providers list are required to do the following:

- ◆ Ensure that the instruction provided is aligned with South Dakota academic achievement standards and in the case of a student with disabilities, will coordinate with the district to assure that instruction is consistent with the student's individualized education program (IEP) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ◆ Provide parents of students receiving coursework and the appropriate school with information on the progress of the student in increasing achievement in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that such parents can understand. Achievement reporting will be consistent with local district policies/timelines.
- ◆ Ensure all individuals who will interact with students are fingerprinted and background checked pursuant to procedures set forth in SDCL 13-10-12
- ◆ Submit to the DOE a final written report that summarizes type of courses offered, the number and names of districts served, number of course registrations, completion rates and grade distributions.
- ◆ Respect the confidentiality of students in the program and share information on the student only with appropriate school personnel and parents.
- ◆ Meet all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws.
- ◆ Be financially sound and will be able to provide complete services to the student and the school.
- ◆ Collaborate with the local school to assure alignment to the student's instructional program and assist the students in reaching the state's high academic content standards.
- ◆ Have liability insurance.
- ◆ Provide, if requested, copies of background checks of all employees/tutors will be made available to school districts.
- ◆ Submit to the DOE a final written report that summarizes type of courses offered, the number and names of districts served, number of course registrations, completion rates and grade distributions.
- ◆ Enter into an agreement with the DOE that includes:
 - A timetable for course achievement that, in the case of a student with disabilities, is consistent with the student's individual education program

- A description of instructional format(s)
- A description of how parents, teacher(s) and the school district will be regularly informed of student progress
- Provisions for the termination of such agreement
- Compliance with FERPA regulations
- The qualifications of staff responsible for the delivery of the instructional program

Evaluation Information

DOE must be confident that the awarded distance learning provider and product will perform and meet the needs of its students, teachers and educational leaders. The DOE will evaluate and make an approval on the service provider that is the best value to the students, teachers and administrators based on the criteria listed in this document. All applications must be complete to be considered. If the application fails to conform to the requirements then the DOE reserves the right to consider the proposal a non-response. The DOE's evaluation process will approve the service provider based upon the best overall value presented in the submitted application. Factors considered will include, but not be limited to, conformance to DOE requirements, financial viability, references, and service/support capabilities (customer service support, delivery capabilities, technology capabilities and reporting).

Monitoring

The South Dakota Department of Education is required to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the services offered by providers and to withdraw approval from providers that fail to contribute to increasing the academic proficiency of students to whom they provide services or that fail to meet any of the other provider requirements or assurances. Failing to operate in accordance with Provider responsibilities or assurances will constitute grounds for immediate removal from the state-approved list. SDDOE has contracted with an external organization that has developed a monitoring system to determine the effectiveness of approved providers. Approved providers will be made aware of the requirements of the evaluation system.

Procedure

The South Dakota Department of Education will use the following procedure for removal from the state approved provider list.

Gathering Information

- ♦ DOE reviews submitted district and provider reports along with its own monitoring reports.
- ♦ DOE reviews evaluation reports from a third-party evaluator.
- ♦ Potential violations cited.
- ♦ District and parent complaint through the district received by DOE

Evaluation of Information

- ♦ Notification to provider of complaints and/or violations
- ♦ DOE further investigates alleged violations.
- ♦ Committee convened to review findings if warranted. Recommendations provided to DOE.
- ♦ DOE renders decision for removal based upon findings and committee recommendations.

Resulting Action

- ♦ First violations for the provider will be noted and the provider is informed of the decision.
- ♦ If the offense is the second violation in two years, the provider's approval status will be removed. Provider may appeal the decision through the appeals process.
- ♦ Decision and timeline for appeal process communicated to the provider.
- ♦ Removal from the state approved provider list. Provider will be immediately notified.
- ♦ Districts will be immediately notified of provider's removal from state approved list.
- ♦ Provider may reapply during the application next window.

Appeals Process

If a provider believes that removal from the state's approved distance learning provider list is unwarranted due to statistical or other substantive reasons, the provider may submit evidence to the SD DOE to support such belief.

Appeal

- The provider will submit a letter and supporting evidence to the DOE indicating the appeal no later than ten working days after receipt of the notice of removal.
- The Department of Education will review the evidence provided.
- Based on the evidence, the Department of Education may either rescind or retain its decision to remove the provider from the list.
- If the decision for removal stands, the Department of Education will activate the appeals committee and inform the provider of details of the appeals committee review.

Appeals Committee Review

- The provider will be given the opportunity to present evidence in person, by written correspondence, or by conference call to the appeals committee.
- The appeals committee will notify the Department of Education of its decision within 10 working days after the review.
- The appeals committee's decision is final.
- The Department of Education will notify the provider of the appeals committee's decision within 20 days of the review.

Appeals Committee

The appeals committee will consist of 3 to 5 members representing state practitioners with expertise in distance delivery programs. Members of the appeals committee will be neutral to the Distance Learning Provider approval process; they are not part of the application approval process, nor represent a district where services from the provider have been used.

Timeline

Providers will be evaluated as warranted. If violations are cited, the appeals committee will be convened in a timely manner in order that removal from the state's approved provider list, if necessary, takes place prior to the start of the school year. Violations of certain requirements may constitute immediate removal. Department of Education retains the right to convene the review committee on an as-needed basis through out the year.

Reporting

No later than June 15 of each participating year, the providers will submit to the DOE a final written report that summarizes type of courses offered, the number and names of districts served, number of course registrations, completion rates and grade distributions.

This information will be used to help determine if a provider will remain on the state-approved list. All state approved providers are expected to provide documentation of communication with the parents and the local attendance area the student is assigned to of the academic progress of each student throughout the school year.

Application Process and Timeline

Proposals may be submitted year round to the South Dakota Department of Education. Send one hard copy and an electronic copy (the electronic copy can be emailed to melody.schopp@state.sd.us).

Address or deliver the application to the following address:

Melody Schopp, Director
Department of Education – Office of Accreditation and Teacher Quality
700 Governor's Drive – Pierre, SD 57501-2291
Ph: (605) 773-5232
melody.schopp@state.sd.us

Provider approvals will be determined and announced by DOE. The approved Distance Learning Provider list will be posted on the Department's website. Applicants that do not meet the qualifications will be notified and may reapply.

Required Format

- All pages must be standard letter size, 8-1/2" x 11" using no smaller than 12 pt. type
- Use a document footer with the name of the entity and page numbers
- Use 1-inch margins
- In filling out Part II "Narrative," please make sure to follow all rules for page limitations
- Please do not bind your documents
- Allowable attachments are limited to letters of reference and printed brochures describing the services provided. Proposal reviewers will not be required to read additional attachments nor website references. Attachments such as CDs, videotapes, or other multimedia productions cannot be accommodated
- Send one hard copy and an electronic copy

Required Elements

A complete application includes:

- ☐ Completed application form
- ☐ Narrative
- ☐ Signed assurances form
- ☐ Allowable attachments
- ☐ Financial Information

Application Form

Distance Learning Provider Service Information

Instructions: Please review and follow all directions carefully when completing this application.

Provider Information: Please type or write clearly.

Company: _____

Program Name: _____

IRS Employer Identification Number: _____

Application Contact Information

Name:	
Title/Position:	
Company/Affiliation:	
Preferred Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Check the box that defines your organization		
<input type="checkbox"/> For profit	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit	<input type="checkbox"/> School district
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Consortium		

Completed applications should be mailed to:

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Learning Management System Functional Requirements

This proposal seeks a combination of a Learning Management System, and supporting tools. The learner tools are followed by a feature-set of required tools and specifications. Explain how your LMS meets the feature-set after each section.

Which primary platform do you use? _____ WebCT _____ Blackboard _____ E-College _____ Other

Learner Tools - Communication Tools

<p>Discussion Forums:</p>	<p>Capture the exchange of messages over time, sometimes over a period of days, weeks, or even months. Threaded discussion forums are organized into categories so that the exchange of messages and responses are grouped together and are easy to find. Discussion forum tools are very similar to Usenet newsgroups where text conversations over time are displayed. The organization of the messages can be a simple temporal sequence or they can be presented as a threaded discussion where only messages on a specific topic called a thread are displayed in sequence. Discussion forums provide automatic notification of new entries showing when an instructor logs in.</p>
<p>File Exchange</p>	<p><i>Tools allow learners to upload files from their local computers and share these files with instructors or other students in an online course. Note: File attachments to messages are part of Internal Email and Discussion Forums. File Exchange tools enable downloading files and upload or posting files over the Web from within the course (e.g., assignment drop box or collaboration/group tools).</i></p>
<p>Internal Email</p>	<p>Electronic mail that can be read or sent from inside an online course. Email tools enable messages to be read and sent exclusively inside the course or alternatively the tools enable links to external email addresses of those in the course so that contacting course Members is facilitated. Internal email may include an address book and some address books are searchable.</p>
<p>Online Journal/Notes</p>	<p>Enable students to make notes in a personal or private journal. Students can share personal journal entries with their instructor or other students but cannot share private journal entries. This tool can be used to facilitate writing assignments in which parts are written over time and then later assembled into a document. This tool can also be used to make personal annotations to pages of a course that can later be used as a study aide. The Online Journal/Notes tool can also be used to record reflections about personal learning accomplishments and how to apply this new</p>

	knowledge.
Real-Time Chat	A conversation between people over the Internet that involves exchanging messages back and forth at virtually the same time. Chat includes facilities like Internet Relay Chat (IRC), Instant Messenger, and similar text exchanges in real time. Some chat facilities allow the chats to be archived for later reference so that they may be more easily used as part of a course grading system.
Video Services	Enable real-time voice and picture (video) interaction as part of the course. Video services include tools for broadcasting video to those without a video input device. Some video services provide for two-way or multi-way video conferencing, which may be point-to-point connections or mediated through a central server.
Whiteboard	The tools include an electronic version of a dry-erase board used by instructors and learners in a virtual classroom (also called smartboard or electronic whiteboard or document camera).
Other	Synchronous services such as application sharing, group browsing, and Voice over IP (also called VoIP or voice chat) allows a software program running on one computer to be viewed and sometimes controlled from a remote computer. Group web browsing allows an instructor to guide learners on a tour of websites using a shared browser window. Voice over IP tools enable two or more to communicate via microphone and speaker conference call style over the Internet connection in real-time. Alternatively, a functionally similar tool is used to set-up and manage a conference call using the telephone system.

Provider Response Area

1. Does your product completely support the above feature set? ___ Yes ___ No
If you answered No, describe precisely where your product does not support the above.
Response Area:
2. Describe how your implementation of this feature set is unique or superior to other products on the market.
Response Area:
3. Provide the pages in your user guide where students and school districts can learn how to work with the features you provide in this section. Clearly identify the page and feature supported.
User Guide Reference pages:
4. Can student-to-student email be monitored by instructor or made unavailable by choice?
Response Area:
5. Are the features you provide in this section part of the core application? ___ Yes ___ No
Additional Provider Comments:
6. Are the features you provide in this section fully covered and included in the base price? ___ Yes ___ No If not, the cost must be clearly identified in the pricing section.
Additional Provider Comments:

Student Productivity Tools

Bookmarks	Students return to important pages within their course or outside their course on the web. In some cases, bookmarks are for an individual student's private use, and in others can be shared with an instructor or with an entire class. Systems vary in allowing students to store their bookmarks in a course folder, a personal folder, or a private folder. Course folders are open to all students and instructors in a course. Personal folders contain bookmarks that individual students can share, whereas bookmarks in private folders are for the student's own use.
Orientation/Help	Provide tools that help students learn how to use the online learning software, often in the form of a self-paced tutorial, guide, or student help desk. Orientation/Help tools enable the student to make the best use of the software. The tools provide tutorials or guides to the various aspects of the software. Additional tools are included to support effective study practices, which can range from simple review tools to mini-courses on how to study effectively. Student help desk tools facilitate the tasks of an operator responding to requests for help by student users of the application and may include some online resources directly available to students such as context sensitive helpful hints and wizard style assistants. A student help desk does not typically offer help with course content.
Plan/Progress Review	Student progress review tools enable students to plan for their workload and assignments typically through a course calendar. This may include the use of an online calendar. Student progress review tools enable the student to check marks on assignments and tests, as well as, their progress through the course material.
Searching within Course	A tool that allows users to find course material based on key words. Searching tools enable students to locate parts of the course materials on the basis of word matching beyond the user's current browser page (that can be searched using the browser>edit>find menu).
Work Offline/Synchronize	This feature provides the ability to work in the course environment offline, and for the work to be synchronized with the next log-in to the course environment. In some products the resume course function also lets users save their place in an online course. This applies to work on PDAs (e.g., Palm, Handspring, Blackberry, MS Windows Mobile, etc.). The ability to work in a course environment offline is especially useful in situations where communication links are unreliable or expensive. This offline environment is essentially a local client application that embodies the important features of the online product without the constant connection to the Internet. When the user resumes the course, the resume course tool is used

to take the user directly to the page of the course or the Sharable Content Object where they had stopped working.

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Response Area:

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User Guide Reference pages:

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Additional Provider Comments:

Student Involvement Tools

Group Work	The capacity to organize a class into groups providing workspace enabling the instructor to assign specific tasks or projects. Some systems enable groups to have their own communication features like real-time chat and discussion forums.
Self-Assessment	Tools that allow students to take practice or review tests online. These assessments do not count toward a grade. When Self-Assessment tools are combined with pedagogical skill in preparing the content of the test items and response feedback there can be positive effects on student motivation.
Student Community Building	Tools that enable online instructors to create a community for students to share ideas or build knowledge. These tools allow the instructor to create and manage small groups using discussion threads, chats, or other course tools in a larger class.
Student Portfolios	Portfolios may be used by students as personal homepages or may be a place for them to showcase their work in a course and cumulative academic history.

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Administration Tools

. Authentication	<p>The procedure that works like a lock and key by providing access to software or a computer system by a user who enters the appropriate user name and password. The term can refer to the procedure through which user names and passwords are created and maintained. Authentication systems can involve a single logon, which is the most user friendly and most vulnerable to hacking. More complicated systems can involve layers with separate logins for each layer and secure socket layer transaction (SSL) encryption.</p>
Course Authorization	<p>The tools that are used to regulate who can use the software and in what way. Authorization tools assign access privileges and other privileges to specific users or user groups (e.g., teaching assistants and designers).</p>
Hosted Services	<p>The online learning provider furnishes the application with the server and technical support from their location so the local education entity does not provide any hardware. Off-site hosting is the service of course hosting from servers at the application provider's location so that the local education entity does not need an application server or the associated network hardware and software (a.k.a., outsourcing web services). An important aspect of outsourcing course hosting is that it includes outsourcing the associated technical support and maintenance as well as the actual web service of providing courses.</p>
Registration Integration	<p>The tools that support the enrollment of students in an online course either by the instructor or through self-registration of the students themselves or through integration with the Student Information System. Registration tools may also include tools for secure credit card transactions. Some registration tools allow instructors to enroll students in batches through the use of formatted text files. Time limited student self-registration may be available to shift the data entry process to the students. This feature includes the integration of the online learning system with an administrative student registration or information system such as the adopted statewide student management package. Integration allows for the following types of functionality: shared common student information, ability to transfer grades back and forth, and ability to have common accounts.</p>

Learning Cycle Management Process	Learning Cycle management deals with the tools necessary to add courses individually or in batch and the ability to purge courses when no longer in use. The ability to archive courses is important.
Reporting and Querying Process	Reporting features include the ability to review and analyze information in multiple formats, sorting by user defined fields. Querying is the ability for users to obtain discrete data elements through ad-hoc requests including phonetic searching.

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Support Tools

Course Delivery Tools

Automated Testing and Scoring	Automated testing and scoring tools allow instructors to create, administer, and score objective tests. Products provide support for proctored testing in a suitable computer lab classroom as an approach to ensuring academic honesty.
Course Management	The tools allow instructors to control the progression of an online class through the course material. Course management tools are used to make specific resources in a course, such as readings, tests or discussions, available to students for a limited time only or after some prerequisites are achieved. This deliberate unfolding of the course resources can be used to prevent students from being overwhelmed and discouraged. Some systems enable this course management to be individualized so that course experience can be tailored to accommodate individual learner situations.
Instructor Help Desk	These tools include resources available for instructors who need help using the product software. This does not typically include assistance with content. Instructor help desk tools may enable instructors to create a community with other instructors to share ideas or build knowledge.
Online Grading Tools	Online grading tools help instructors mark, provide feedback on student work, and manage a grade book. Online grading tools enable instructors to mark assignments online, and store grades.
Student Tracking	Student Tracking is the ability to track the usage of course materials by students and to perform additional analysis and reporting both of aggregate and individual usage. Student tracking tools include facilities for statistical analysis of student related data and to display the progress of individual students in the course structure. The data generally consists of both activities and the time stamps of when the activity occurred.

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Curriculum Design Tools

<p>Accessibility Compliance</p>	<p>Accessibility compliance means meeting the standards that allow people with disabilities to access information online. Accessibility for persons with disabilities entails providing for a version that can be processed by a screen reader. The practical accessibility difficulties are compounded by the fact that persons with disabilities do not have recent equipment and software.</p>
<p>Course Templates</p>	<p>Instructors use templates to go through a step-by-step process to set-up the essential features of a course. Course templates are artifacts of particular pedagogical approaches to instructional content and process. The local value of particular templates will depend in part on the match between the template designer's approach and the specific instructor's approach.</p>
<p>Curriculum Management</p>	<p>Curriculum management provides students with customized programs or activities based on prerequisites, prior work, or assessments. Curriculum management includes tools to manage multiple programs, to enable skills/competencies management, and to handle certification management.</p>
<p>Instructional Standards Compliance</p>	<p>Instructional standards compliance concerns how well a product conforms to standards for sharing instructional materials with other online learning systems and other factors that may affect the decision of whether to switch from one product to another. Instructional standards compliance involves trying to make it possible for applications from different product producers to work well together. Other migration considerations are situations that would make switching to another application more complicated, such as proprietary data formats for content, which make it difficult to import course content into another application. To the extent that student data is maintained in the system there can be separate complications in migrating non-course information to other versions or platforms.</p>

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Instructor

Assessment Tools	Tools that allow instructors to review quizzes, tests, and other student assignments, analyze results, assign weights to questions and generally assess student, class, and course progress.
Instructor Community Building	Tools that enable online instructors to create a community with other instructors to share ideas or build knowledge.
Online Grade Book	

Provider Response Area

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Service Provider Summary

(Please limit responses to one word or short phrases. This information will be used in the compilation of a statewide master chart for parents and school districts.)

Name of provider	
Contact Person and contact information	
Schools/Districts Served	
Specific location of service delivery (See Question 7 of Element One)	
If service delivery is not at the student's school, is transportation provided, and, if yes, is there a separate fee? (Note: Districts are not required to provide or pay for transportation.)	
Type of certification of instructors	
Minimum number of students needed in order to provide services	
Maximum number of students able to be serviced	
Length of program (How many weeks/days?)	
Estimated cost of coursework per student, per class	
Grade levels served	
Specifics of reporting to parents & school (format, frequency, method of communication)	
Description of services available to diverse populations (i.e., special needs, specific languages)	

Program Description

Please provide a **narrative** description of your program that can be used to market your services to parents and provide information to schools and districts. Program summaries should include:

- The model of instruction, including specific strategies to evaluate the program's effectiveness
- The ratio of instructors to students
- The schedule of delivery of services
- The qualifications of your staff
- Instructional materials and equipment provided (and those the student is required to provide, if any)
- Master schedule of courses, times offered, instructional staff and course syllabi.

Assurances and Signatures Form

In submitting this application to be included on the South Dakota Department of Education Approved Distance Learning Provider List, I, as the provider will:

- ✓ Ensure that the instruction provided is aligned with South Dakota academic achievement standards and in the case of a student with disabilities, will coordinate with the district to assure that instruction is consistent with the student's individualized education program (IEP) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ✓ Provide parents of students receiving coursework and the appropriate school with information on the progress of the student in increasing achievement in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that such parents can understand. Achievement reporting will be consistent with local district policies/timelines.
- ✓ Ensure all individuals who will interact with students are fingerprinted and background checked pursuant to procedures set forth in SDCL 13-10-12
- ✓ Submit to the DOE a final written report that summarizes type of courses offered, the number and names of districts served, number of course registrations, completion rates and grade distributions.
- ✓ Respect the confidentiality of students in the program and share information on the student only with appropriate school personnel and parents.
- ✓ Meet all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws.
- ✓ Be financially sound and will be able to provide complete services to the student and the school.
- ✓ Collaborate with the local school to assure alignment to the student's instructional program and assist the students in reaching the state's high academic content standards.
- ✓ Have liability insurance.
- ✓ Provide, if requested, copies of background checks of all employees/tutors will be made available to school districts.
- ✓ Enter into an agreement with the DOE that includes:
 - A timetable for course achievement that, in the case of a student with disabilities, is consistent with the student's individual education program
 - A description of instructional format(s)
 - A description of how parents, teacher(s) and the school district will be regularly informed of student progress
 - Provisions for the termination of such agreement
 - Compliance with FERPA regulations
 - The qualifications of staff responsible for the delivery of the instructional program

Upon notification of approval for a distance learning certificate by the DOE the provider will have 60 days to submit remittance for the fee of \$100.

Signature

Title

Date

